Other Adult Prevention or Intervention Issues

Wyoming has many opportunities to use prevention and intervention thinking as doors for treatment with adults, protecting the current and future generations. This part of the plan reviews some recommendations for adults.

Prescription Drug Abuse

In the course of the HB 83 study, the authors learned more about the emergence of abuse of prescription drugs. We heard testimony of how some middle age women had died from the combined effects of alcohol and prescription drugs. We also learned about the emergence of serious fraud to obtain drugs like Oxycontin, which are premier, high- quality drugs to abuse. This particular drug is fast becoming a scourge in America—particularly rural America. The future of pharmaceutics promises that we will likely see more and more drugs that have the potential to be abused in unusual ways.

Lacking a computerized registry, the Wyoming Pharmacy Board was able to provide limited data on use of controlled substances in our state. It is clear from the data in 16 of the state's largest pharmacies that there is prescription fraud happening, and the data only tapped the proverbial tip of the iceberg. Prescription fraud is something that cuts across many levels of society. Well-to-do executives and health professionals to welfare recipients obtain multiple prescriptions under different names, go doctor shopping, create fake prescriptions, pretend to be a doctor's office, and more. The only practical way

to stop these behaviors that have real lifethreatening impact is for a computerized registry, which can look for patterns. Wyoming does not have such a system, and must simply depend on the memory or hunches of people in our communities. For a relatively modest amount of money, Wyoming can implement a state of the art computer system for monitoring controlled substances. It is strongly recommended that we do so at the earliest time.

Wyoming Recommendation:

The Legislature should urgently direct and appropriate the funds for the Pharmacy Board to implement state-of-the-art computerized and related protocols for the management of scheduled drugs and reduction of prescription fraud.

In addition to this particular effort, Wyoming is unique in having the capacity to implement a warning system inside of its Medicaid system. Wyoming is significantly upgrading its computer system for Medicaid management, and has the decision software that would allow analyzing patient Medicaid records to look for patterns that would predict danger of prescription substance abuse or misuse or possible adverse interactions. Interviews with pharmaceutical company representatives have suggested that an analysis of the Medicaid records could reveal patients with difficulties or high risk and, perhaps, practices that may be engaged in inappropriate prescriptions of controlled substances.

Wyoming Recommendation:

It is recommended that additional staffing resources be allocated to bring on board a thorough implementation of the Medicaid software analyses of potential prescription drug abuse or interactions that can result in serious adverse consequences by drug interactions.

Cessation

Tobacco cessation can dramatically improve the public's health, reduce harm to vulnerable individuals such as infants and children, and save millions of dollars as a result of harm reduction. dd The general public often believes that cessation is the same process for all individuals. Such a view is not supported by extensive medical research. There are emerging protocol differences for cessation strategies, which may or may not include medications. The Centers for Disease Control database contains evidence for differentiated protocols that include:

- Adult males
- Adult females
- Pregnant women
- Mothers with children under age 9
- Adolescent males
- Adolescent females
- Poly-substance abuse use individuals
- Youth with mental-health disorders (e.g., attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder) 154
- dd See the Wyoming Tobacco Use Prevention
 Blueprint for fuller treatment of the cost and
 public health issues, Wyoming Department of
 Health, Substance Abuse Division

- Adults with mental-health disorders
- Individuals with chronic tobaccorelated diseases
- Homeless individuals
- Chewing tobacco

These differentiated strategies require careful planning, support, and training for both health professionals and community leaders. They may even be delivered by non-traditional sources, such as church groups, with positive effects. 155 Physicians in rural areas vary their advice to guit smoking, depending on presenting characteristics of the tobacco user; they need interventions to improve their success in getting patients to quit. 156 A growing body of evidence suggests that computer-assisted, customized cessation programs are quite effective. 157 Such strategies are well suited for the conditions of Wyoming since such services can be delivered via the Internet. Whatever protocols are used, it is vital that data be kept on their effects so that protocols can be improved and fine-tuned over time.

Wyoming Recommendation:

Consistent with the Tobacco Use Prevention Blueprint adopted into law by the State Legislature, we recommend that the Legislature instruct the Department of Health to undertake a comprehensive tobacco cessation program, using both Tobacco Settlement funds and general funds. This authorization would include of free medical adjunctive supplies such as nicotine patches, nasal spray, or other such systems as deemed medically useful. by the Director.

Driving Under the Influence

Driving drunk or under the influence is not a defensible personal liberty. The consequences to the public safety and health, not to mention the pain of loss to innocent victims, exact a heavy toll in the United States and Wyoming.



We recommend that judges, prosecutors, and others as appropriate use or require new systems of assuring compliance with the DUI law as certified by the Director of Health. Devices may include:

- Patches for detecting drug use
- Ignition interlock devices

Other systems with scientific validity. If necessary the DUI laws may need to be amended so that judges and prosecutors may introduce data from such systems as violation of the appropriate laws.

Some Specific Legislative or Policy Issues

In the course of preparing this report, a number policy or legislative details emerged that merit mentioning to improve prevention and intervention of substance abuse. These are action issues:

- ⇒ The state of Wyoming has made a rather significant political commitment to youth development. The idea is rather simple: When young people are treated and seen as community assets, their rates of problem behavior goes down, and their rates of success in multiple domains increase. It would be useful as symbol and substance for the state to appoint youth representatives to many committees or activities of state government. It is fundamentally a no-cost strategy, but a high-powered signal that we value our young people.
- ⇒ A host of details, regulations and policies may represent barriers to effective prevention in Wyoming. These rules and policies need to be examined:
- o FERPA (Family Educational Records and Papers Act) technically bare many of the interventions and strategies that are actually proven to reduce the types of issues that are very problematic—school failure, antisocial behavior, and substance abuse. For example, in good quality research, the square footage of student work on the walls is associated with reduced risk of problem behavior in the schools. Teachers in Wyoming have been told that it is illegal to put up student work, and this has made the front page of the Cheyenne newspaper. In a similar vein, public recognition of improved

- student academics or behavior would be a violation of the law, yet such recognition is absolutely a key for avoiding the problems that people don't want in their children's records. Several interventions recommended in this plan (e.g., the Good Behavior Game and Class-wide Peer Tutoring) are technically illegal under FERPA—yet these very interventions are hailed as "best practices" by any number of federal and private sources. There several courses of action to remedy this problem:
- a) for the Wyoming Department of Education to issue some clarifying regulations, which is permitted by the federal government; or
- b) our Congressional delegation to introduce amendments to these laws to remedy these issues;
- c) join the legal action before the US Supreme Court; and
- d) all of the above.
- Many schools and educational organizations tell adults NEVER to touch children, for fear of charges of sexual abuse. This rule is probably harming Wyoming children rather than helping them. An introductory course in Psychology quickly talks about the role of touch in the developmental process, showing the poor, unfortunate monkeys raised by Harry Harlow on a wire mommy monkey, or orphans, or neonates in intensive care. The lesson from the research is always that primates and humans need touch to survive and develop. Indeed, randomized controlled studies have shown that therapeutic massage reduces rage, acting out, and deviant

behavior in hospitalized adolescents. Touch changes the neurochemistry of the brain—most particularly. serotonin. 158 Abnormally low levels of serotonin dispose people to depression. aggression, and antisocial behavior. Touch tends to increase serotonin, elevating mood. Contingent touch by teachers improves behavior of children, particularly reducing 159 aggression. One of the "best practices" for multi-problem youth in terms for reducing substance abuse teaches warm, positive touch in school. 160 Self-massage reduces craving and smoking, by stimulating the serotongenic circuitry. 161 Presently large numbers of our students and staff at school are manipulating their levels of serotonin in other ways: 1) antidepressant drugs, 2) tobacco smoke, and 3) illegal drugs like ecstasy. As scientists and therapists, we find it exceedingly odd not to do what humans are hard-wired to do (touch)—especially when the absence of serotonin increases sexually charged behavior.

Thus, it is time for the body politic to consider some remedy for a situation that is fostering precisely what people don't want, and increasing the very problems people are seeking to avoid.

- assault, and the procedures to define more precisely what sexual advances might be in a school setting. This change might bring more joy back to teachers and students alike.
- o School hours for community based programs need to be addressed. During testimony, we heard several times how community entities were blocked from providing obviously beneficial activities (e.g., clubs, support groups, activities) —that are likely to reduce substance abuse. School buildings have been built with public funds, and it seems possible for the Legislature to craft legislation to enable citizens and groups to use our state buildings for prevention and intervention services.
- o Some research exists suggesting school diet might affect behavior and neurology related to substance abuse and antisocial behavior. This is not the simple "sugar" theory. There are a few, serious studies that suggest that changes in the school lunch program in a very large number of schools (800 in one study) improve behavior, academics, and mood of the children. One study shows a reduction in delinquent behavior. Until very recently, scientists had little in the way to understand why the

Note: two other sections contain elements related to prevention and early intervention in this report. One section describes social marketing, and the other describes the data systems.

It would seem possible to craft some kind of legislation that stated quite simply that normal touch in the course of teaching is not evidence of sexual

effect might occur. Recent advances of neurochemistry makes of the potential effects explainable. Attempts

to replicate this work would seem desirable, but many schools and their employees charged with the lunch program cite a knot of rules and regulations that stop replication. The simplicity of the intervention and the emerging science of what alteration in diet might effect antisocial behavior and achievement (variables in the prediction of substance abuse) suggest that Wyoming would lose nothing by testing the idea experimentally, and it may take some regulatory or minor legislative action to enable the experiment.

o On several occasions, we heard testimony from teachers or

administrators who feared lawsuits or job loss for referring a child to some kind of drug intervention or even reporting the matter to the police. At the same time, we heard many stories from the kids who were seriously abusing drugs, "no body ever said anything—and I had needle marks in my arms, and I was carrying around booze in a water bottle." It seems appropriate to amend the laws so that teachers cannot be fired for reporting suspected substance abuse or sued for reporting suspected use of substances by a minor the Department of Family Services or law enforcement.

State Incentive Grant for 11-17 Year Olds

Just before the completion of this report, the Wyoming Substance Abuse Division received word that Wyoming has been selected to receive a \$9,000,000 (over three years) federal substance abuse prevention state incentive grant. This grant was written in ways to mesh with the HB 83 Blueprint, and it will greatly help with some of the prevention startup costs. The state incentive grant will only cover strategies for 11-17 year old youth.

Wyoming Wins: Costs Averted

In the actual implementation of the prevention, intervention, and control (access) strategies proposed in this blueprint, some effects will be quick—especially if the timing of which strategies are chosen wisely. These "wins" will help avert costs, which then help sustain the expenses that the state will

The State Incentive Grant will assist in the evaluation of elements of the prevention plan as well as provide funds for regional or community level interventions. The authors of this report caution readers that the grant is a one-time gift, and should not be thought of as providing operational funds. Rather the grant is extremely useful because so much is being planned at once in Wyoming, and it helps spread out the start up expenses.

have to bear for more expensive treatment interventions. Conceptually, the powerful strategies can avert costs and problems associated with substance abuse and related multi-problems. The figure below shows conceptual map of averting costs. A separate paper will be prepared before the 2002 Legislative Session about possible costs averted.

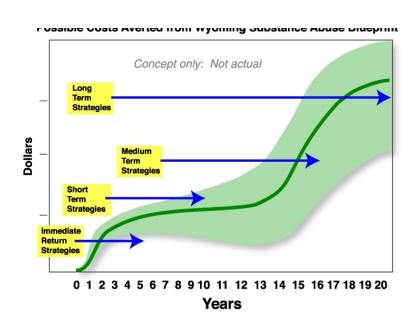


Figure 39: Possible Costs Averted From Wyoming's Blueprint